SUMMARY

INDIAN SKELETAL DISCOVERIES IN ARUBA AND CURAÇAO

THE SKELETAL DISCOVERIES OF A. J. VAN KOOLWIJK

The first – and, as yet, the only – study devoted to discoveries of skeletal remains in the Netherlands Antilles is an article on '*Schädel von Curaçao und Aruba*' (Skulls from Curaçao and Aruba), by G. A. KOEZE, which was published in 1904. This contains a brief description of five poorly preserved skulls collected by Father A. J. VAN KOOLWIJK, one from Curaçao and four from Aruba, which, according to the writer, were of very little scientific value.

The Curaçao skull was found on Knip Plantation, near the coast. It lay on a dish, and three other dishes had been built round it in the form of a roof (Cat. Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (State Museum of Ethnography), Leiden, 1403 No. 982). On recent further examination this skull proved to have been reconstructed with plaster in such a way that it would be better to forget the dimensions given for it by KOEZE. Furthermore, the 209? given for the greatest length (1904, p. 22) is obviously a printing error for 200; this tallies better with the index stated, and with the length of 202 mm found after a fresh measurement had been carried out.

One Aruban skull (Fig. 11–12) was supposed to be that of the last of the original inhabitants of the island (NICOLAAS PYCLAS), who died round about 1840. This skull (No. 316a) was found to be mesocranial and high; the age at death was estimated at approximately 50 years. On remeasuring it J. TACOMA found the following: greatest length 171; greatest breadth 134; height, basion-bregma, 135; cranial index 78.4; mean height index 88.5.

The three other Aruban skulls were found in urns, on a site to the west of Santa Cruz, where excavations were also carried out by Professor J. P. B. DE JOSSELIN DE JONG in 1926 and Professor J. M. CRUXENT in 1953. According to Koeze these were even more poorly preserved; they were, in fact no longer found in the condition of skulls.

THE SKELETAL DISCOVERIES OF A. D. RINGMA

After Father VAN KOOLWIJK, the late A. D. RINGMA (Fig. 4) was the first person to try to augment our knowledge of the pre-Columbian inhabitants of Curaçao and Aruba by collecting skeleton remains. In January 1950 he found in Curaçao the remains of five persons (Fig. 1) who had not been buried in urns, in the 'abri' at Hato in which he had discovered rock carvings six months before. The state of preservation of the skeletons – which have been numbered *Hato-1, 2, 3, 4* and *5* – was very bad.

Hato-1 lay in a bed of loose black earth, along with many relics of fires, shells and potsherds, at a depth of 50–60 cm. The skeleton was practically complete, but of the skull only the cap was present. Age: 9–14 years (Figs. 5–7).

Of *Hato-2*, only scattered fragments were found.

From the remains of the skull of *Hato-3* it was possible for J. TACOMA to reconstruct a horizontal outline. In this way he arrived at a length of 174 mm and a breadth of 134 mm, i.e. a cranial index of 77. As far as this horizontal skull form is concerned, the skull is mesocranial and, like the Canashito skulls (see below), would fit into the group described as Amazonid by Imbelloni. Age: more than 40 years.

The material of *Hato-4* consisted only of a few fragments.

Hato-5 is the almost complete, well preserved skeleton of a child of about 5 years old. The skull is, however, missing, except for the lower jaw (Fig. 8–10).

In the year in which he carried out his excavations at Hato, RINGMA also spent a short holiday in making an archaeological reconnaissance of Aruba. At the foot of the Seroe Canashito, not far from the well-known 'urn field' of Santa Cruz, he found five skeletons (Figs. 2–3) at a depth of 5–20 cm, in conditions corresponding to those at Hato. The skulls of three of them – *Canashito-1*, *2* and *3* – were still in so good a state that a number of measurements could be performed on them.

This material was closely studied by J. TACOMA, to whose publication on '*Indian skeletal remains from Aruba*' (following on this article) reference may also be made.

Over de in deze 'Studies on the physical anthropology of the Netherlands Antilles' I en II behandelde onderwerpen werden lezingen gehouden op de 28ste Vergadering van de 'Natuurwetenschappelijke Studiekring voor Suriname en de Nederlandse Antillen', welke op 26 juni 1959 in het Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde werd belegd. De schrijvers zijn de „Studiekring" dankbaar voor de financiële steun welke het mogelijk maakte dat hun verhandelingen van illustraties werden voorzien.